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TO ALL PARTY UNITS

DANGEROUS FOOD CRISIS AND OUR DUTY

The black shadow of a famine is covering India today. West Bengal, Bihar and certain parts of Madras are already within its grip. All governmental efforts to keep back news of this famine have failed and that of about one hundred deaths from starvation in Bihar and more than one in West Bengal and south Madras has already come out. Hyderabad and Mysore are also facing famines.

India imported 3,700,000 tons of foodgrains in 1949 but this figure was brought down to only 2,000,000 in 1950. "Grow More Food" campaign is a great bluff of the Nehru Government. The Central Government will not be able to feed the deficit areas.

According to official estimates, West Bengal has food deficit of 4,400,000 tons. Even the chairman of the official Foodgrains Investigation Committee has admitted that if central help does not come through during the July-February period, another '43 famine is sure to happen in this state. This famine will be more serious and longer. In Bihar, about 4 to 5 million people have already fallen within the grip of famine. According to official estimates by the Madras Government, they have a food shortage of 2,150,000 tons, but the Central Government has been able to send them only 30,000 tons of rice. Food crisis has already happened in ten Madras districts. Bombay has a deficit of 200,000 tons; Hyderabad, 100,000 tons and Mysore, 40,000 tons.

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WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THIS FAMINE AND WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?

The present administrators of India are entirely responsible for this dangerous situation. During the 200 years of British rule, India would have a famine once every 24 years and thousands of Indian lives would be lost in these famines. Although Mountbatten has now left, his legacies are still continuing. More and more peasants are being exploited by the imperialist and feudalistic systems, resulting in smaller food production. That is the reason for this famine.

On the one hand, food production is decreasing; on the other, our rulers are importing smaller quantities of foodstuffs at the instance of their Anglo-American bosses. The money thus saved is being utilized in meeting a bigger war budget and in buying arms and ammunition from Anglo-American capitalists. This is how our Congress Government is being a partisan to the Anglo-American conspiracy to bring in another war. This Congress Government has become an instrument in the hands of Anglo-American imperialists in their all-out war against Soviet Russia and other new democracies. They are thus depriving the Indians of the cheap foodstuffs that can be obtained from these countries. It has now been proved that the "Grow More Food" campaign is a mere hoax and a means to fill the pockets of the Ministers, officers and contractors.

In order to please the Indian and British jute dealers, this Government stopped cultivation of food grains in thousands of acres of land and had jute grown thereon. In the interest of big bourgeois this government has had cotton grown in thousands of acres of lands which used to grow food-grains.

The riot, which was a creation of imperialist interests, compelled thousands of acres of cultivable land to remain uncultivated being deserted by members of the minority community. The Congress Government is following the same inflationary principles as were adopted by the imperialists during the war. Not only that: they devalued the rupee at the instance of the Anglo-American imperialists and thus intensified the crisis. Consequently, prices of all foodgrains and other consumer goods shot up horribly and created conditions favorable for famine. Above all, they have entrusted monopolists with responsibilities of procurement. That is why both procurement and distribution are at stake.

The attack on Korea by America gave an opportunity to the monopolists to aggravate the situation and raise prices of all commodities.

THESE ARE THE REASONS FOR THE FAMINE THAT HAS RAISED ITS HEAD IN OUR COUNTRY.

SOLUTION PROPOSED BY THE RULERS

The rulers have taken a most shameful attitude in this situation which was, in fact, created by themselves. They ask the people to eat groundnut flour and to feed on roots and vegetables. They advise them to kill monkeys and thus to solve the food problem. In a country where most people cannot have one full meal a day, they are advising them to pass one day every week with only one meal.

The Ministers and their officers are earning money by giving freedom to profiteers. They are trying to suppress news of the famine that is already taking toll of many human lives. Wherever there is a hunger-procession, they call it "Communist conspiracy." And above all, they are setting a cruel 'police raj' free to oppress the starved people.

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SOLUTION SUGGESTED BY THE PEOPLE AND THEIR DEMAND

In these circumstances, these are the clear demands of the people:

1. Government should declare those areas of West Bengal, Bihar and Madras where starvation has started as famine areas.
2. Foodgrains should be distributed at fair prices in cities and deficit areas through people's food committees.
3. No ration cuts should be allowed in labor areas. Cheap rations should be supplied for entire families of workers.
4. Food stocks of profiteers and land lords should be seized and the responsibilities to make this seizure should be entrusted to people's volunteers.
5. No forcible seizure of foodgrains from peasants should be allowed and they should be given fair prices.
6. Food must be imported from abroad to fill the shortage. An anti-imperialist stand should be taken and food should be imported from Soviet Union and other new democracies. Now the Government is spending half of its budget on military account; this figure must be lowered and food should be purchased with that amount.
7. Barren lands and government-owned lands should be distributed among poor peasants and financial help should also be given to them to do the cultivation.
8. The zamindari system should be discontinued without any compensation and the lands thus released should be distributed among peasants.

OUR TACTICS ON THE FOOD FRONT

We have discussed above how Nehru Government has faced the food problem. The people have received bullets whenever they have demanded food. In the name of law and order they stop all mass meeting and processions, but they are eager to save the interests of black marketers and profiteers. They are also determined to continue feudalistic systems in rural areas, however much the sufferings of the people may be. They are eager to increase police budgets but they do not care to spend any money for flood control, irrigation and power generation. So it is absolutely useless to expect anything from a government of this nature. The only way open to the people now is to launch an unstinted struggle against these rulers. It should be remembered that they are already cornered and hunger-processions are being taken out in Malabar, Bihar, West Bengal and Poona. The people have forcibly occupied rice stocks in some areas of Bihar, Assam and Bengal (Nadia district) and the government is hitting them with the help of the police.

Many leftist and other anti-government organizations have started movements on the issue of food. The main purpose of these movements is to expose the government and to show that they are unable to feed the people. But these groups do not go out for some higher type of revolutionary struggle. They do not tell the people that real solution of these problems is possible only if the present feudalistic systems can be overturned and a people's government established. What they are doing is to divert the popular discontent through an electioneering channel.

Now what should be the duty of the Communist Party in this crisis? And how we should approach this problem? Now an extensively wide united front can be formed? We must answer all these questions.

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First of all we have to admit that the responsibility for such a critical struggle has been vested in the hands of some bourgeois or petty bourgeois groups or on the spontaneous outburst of the people. Since the publication of the January 27 editorial in "Lasting Peace" the entire Party has been engaged in discussions of its own internal problems. Although this is necessary it is also an offence to keep out of popular struggles spontaneously started. A review of the last six months' work would show that we have seriously failed in our duties toward many popular movements. Without participating in such activities and by merely having academic discussion of our internal problems we will never be able to arrive at any definite Party line. By doing this the Party gets farther away from the mass. The problem becomes all the more serious when it involves a crisis like food shortage and famine. Now every comrade should start a struggle against famine and the makers of this famine.

- (a). The Communist Party should declare that the eight demands given above are the demands of the people. And they must stick to these demands, because until they are fulfilled there is no way out of the danger of a famine.
- (b) It is the duty of the working class and of the Communist Party to unite the people on this front. All groups and factions, who claim to be speaking on behalf of the people, should also be united on this front. We will cooperate with all such groups. Without such a strong and really united front it will not be possible for the people to defeat the profiteers and other reactionaries. We will achieve victory if we can really unite. On the other hand, if we sit idle, defeat awaits us. The Communist Party should take the initiative in this struggle. Whoever will obstruct this move will be exposed as the enemy of the people.
- (c) The Communist Party will make all the necessary preparations for all possible actions in this connection. They will range from food relief, propaganda, meetings, demonstrations, etc., to forceful seizure of food stocks from zeminders, formation of guerrilla squads, etc.
- (d) The Communist Party does not have any illusion like these: that the Nehru-Patel Government will solve the people's food problem; that the struggle should be confined within the limits of peaceful means like hunger-processions, demonstrations and propaganda, etc. The Communist Party is convinced that revolutionary measures like forceful seizure of foodgrains by the people and also forceful possession of lands from land-lords and to distribute them among the starving people are the best means to achieve success in struggles of this kind. Of course, the Party will take into consideration the different states of affairs in different parts of the country in regard to various types of bans, etc., and it will, from time to time, consider the measures that will be suitable to carry on this struggle in different areas.

The propaganda of some leftist and opposition leaders as to the convenience of the legal and constitutional means should also be ruthlessly exposed. At the same time, the Communist Party will propagate their own ideas and will inspire the people to take resort to revolutionary ways of struggle.

If we fail to do our revolutionary duties to the struggling people we will commit an unpardonable offence. We must never leave the people alone at times of police or military oppression.

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In areas where famine has already shown up and where the class-enemies are oppressing the people with the help of police and military, guerrilla squads should be formed with Party members and non-members so that continued struggle can be carried out. The necessity for armed opposition to the enemy has grown out of his aggressive policies.

OPPORTUNITY BEFORE US, AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO

The present food crisis and famine conditions in the country have so much widened the scope that we can easily form a united front, through the process of our struggle on the food front, under the leadership of the labor class and their leaders. The Party must be prepared to do this in every possible way. We must shake off all our narrowness of the past. Simultaneously with the intensification of the people's demand for food we will mobilize all our resources to launch an all-out attack on land-lords, profiteers and the Government. We will send out our call to everybody -- from petty bourgeois to the poorest people from landless peasants to rich peasants. We must approach the United Socialist Organization of India, the United Trade Union Congress, All-India Trade Union Congress, etc., to do this. We will also approach the members at large of the Socialist Party as well as the leaders of its local units. We will also have to approach the various units of the All-India National Trade Union Congress in our area. We should also not lose sight of that portion of the Congress that is being disillusioned of its activities and this segment of the Congress should be drawn into this popular struggle.

In rural areas mass gathering should be arranged accompanied by armed squads and strike against land-lords and hoarders should be started suddenly. Of course, face-to face fight with the police or military should be avoided as far as practicable. When government stocks of food grains are moved they should be ambushed and seized by armed guerrilla squads.

The food stocks thus obtained should be distributed through food committees or united village committees in respective areas.

One thing should be remembered: Under no circumstances should food stocks of rich peasants be seized for this purpose, because that will antagonize them. They should, instead, be persuaded to contribute food stocks to relief-stocks or to sell them at fair prices. But no coercion should be made on them. On the other hand, if government agents want to seize their (of rich peasants) foodgrain stocks, help should be given them.

Demands should also be made to stop food exports from deficit areas. Simultaneously with demands for food supplies, the demand for the end of the zamindari system should also be made popular. The tempo of the struggle on the food front should be utilized in intensifying the bigger demand for an end of all feudalistic systems. Landless peasants should be given land through the people's village committees.

The Communist Party will not let the people die of starvation as 5,000,000 of them died in 1943. We will lead them into the struggle for food. Armed guerrilla fight will constitute the main feature of the struggle against starvation and death. This tactic has been taken from the examples of China.

One thing must be clear to us: the famine and famine conditions and the situation that brings starvation to millions of our people will not end until there is an end of the present imperialist rule. As many as eighty

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famines occurred during the 200 years of British rule in this country. More famines will follow unless the rule of the present big bourgeois can be brought to an end. And the various types of struggle that is now going to take place in villages and cities are the real struggle for freedom of the country.

CONTRADES:

Our people must not die of starvation - we won't let them die like that. The havoc of 1943 must not be allowed to happen again.

Go and stand before the people in their struggle for food and against death.

Unite all the people in the struggle against famine and starvation.

Build a strong democratic front against the profiteers and the present administration.

Introduce rationing system for sufficient food in towns and deficit areas under the supervision of people's food committees.

Seize food stocks and distribute them among starving people through people's food committees.

Introduce the system of allotting land seized from land-lords without paying any compensations to them.

End the feudalistic administration which is creating famine and causing death of the people. Go ahead along the path to India's freedom and establishment of a people's democratic government.

POINT BUREAU
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